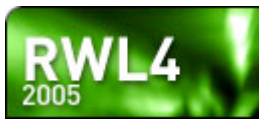




RWL4 Symposium Proposal

1.	Convenor(s) name(s) and complete contact details	
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2.	Symposium title	
	Trade unions, work and learning	
4.	Goal or purpose of the symposium	
	<p>This symposium will investigate the educational implications of trade unions shifting from co-determining workplace training with employers, and focusing on building internal capacity.</p> <p>Throughout the 1980s and 1990s unions in different countries sought to influence and guide the restructuring of vocational and workplace education policy. Unions set out to establish partnership arrangements with government and business in order to promote international competitiveness, and to widen participation. In many countries, though not all, new tri-partite bodies were established and new funding mechanisms were introduced to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Since the mid 1990s the decline in union membership and density, which is a feature common to most of the western world, has led many unions to shift their emphasis away from influencing public policy to organising new members in order to stop the decline. New methods of organising and education have been adopted to support this change in direction.</p> <p>What are some of these strategies, and what is the organisational learning dimension of unions' shift to the organising model? Has the decline in union density combined with restrictive industrial legislation meant that unions are no longer in a position to influence public policy on work-related education and learning? And does the current environment call for a re-definition of what work-related education encompasses?</p>	
5.	A preliminary list of speakers indicating whether they have already committed to give a talk, or just expressed interest in participating of the symposium.	
	<p><i>D'Arcy Martin</i> (CSEW, University of Toronto), <i>Carol Wall</i> (Public Service Alliance of Canada) and <i>Barb Thomas</i> (Ontario Public Service Employees Union)</p>	



Will lead a discussion on issues of race and gender equity in education for union renewal. We will report on applications of our book "Education for Changing Unions" (2002, with two other co-authors) to organizing, bargaining, strategic planning and informal learning in Canadian unions. Throughout, our question will be whose movement is being renewed. All three of us have reserved our flights six months ahead, and look forward to a lively and creative dialogue with participants!

Ellen Scully-Ross (Columbia University, USA)

Will share information on models of union engagement in workplace education and training in the US and discuss the challenges union leaders and educators face to linking job related education and training to organizing and union building. Industry-wide, regional and company specific models will be shared and compared. The focus will be on locating leverage for gains on strategic union goals, like organizing and job growth.

Anders Vind (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions – LO)

Anders is an advisor to the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions on questions of human resource development and education/training issues. He will introduce recent developments in the Danish trade union strategies in relation to Lifelong learning and the linkage between workplace activities and general negotiations. There will be a brief evaluation of the results from using the national agreements regarding training and workplace development and current key challenges to a traditional collectivistic approach through general negotiations will be highlighted.

Michelle Bissett (Australian Council of Trade Unions, ACTU)

Linda Cooper and Rahmat Omar (Universities of Cape Town and Western Cape)

The recent history of the South African labour movement is different from that of other labour movements in Europe and North America. Since the end of apartheid, it has shifted from union education for mass mobilisation to education to enable unionists to engage in partnerships and co-determination with government and business on a wide range of issues. We will share information on the political and organisational challenges facing South African trade unions in the 'new' South Africa, and their implications for trade union engagement in workplace education and training, in the broader context of globalisation.

Tony Brown (University of Technology, Sydney)

Will talk about new educational initiatives undertaken by two Australian union's aimed at developing capacity, growth and new ways of knowing among officers and activists. These programs combine both formal and non-formal educational activity and have been developed in the context of a new organising model aimed at reversing declining union density, changes in patterns of employment, and a hostile legal and industrial environment that restricts the ability of unions to organise.

Ursule Critoph (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Athabasca University)

Will talk about the Canadian labour movement's efforts to increase the capacity of unions to deal with workforce training and adjustment. Through a series of social bargaining, sectoral, and union-only initiatives in the 1990s and early 2000s, aimed at the local, provincial, and national levels, unions in Canada have worked to prepare their members for the *new economy* and to ameliorate the impacts of various adjustment pressures. The central question was and remains, has it made any difference? And if so, why or why not?



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